



## Request for Proposal: OCALI External Evaluator

**Release Date:** Monday, August 23, 2021

**Deadline:** Tuesday, September 7, 2021, at 3:00pm EDT

### Overview

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#### Who Are We?

OCALI, a project of the Educational Service Center of Central Ohio (ESCCO), is a recognized global leader in creating and connecting resources and relationships to ensure that people with disabilities have the opportunity to live their best lives for their whole lives. OCALI informs public policy and develops and deploys practices grounded in linking research to real life.

As a trusted source, OCALI enhances, develops, and promotes high-quality programs and services to effectively equip anyone who cares for, supports, educates, employs, or works with individuals with disabilities across the lifespan.

OCALI's organizational structure includes ten Centers/Offices that collectively focus on local and statewide-capacity building while strengthening policies and resources that guide services and supports for people with disabilities, as well as for families, educators, service providers, and professionals.

Additionally, in its commitment to narrow the gap between state policy and its translation to "boots-on-the-ground", OCALI has an established Office of Policy and Stakeholder Engagement to keep OCALI informed and connected to the goals, priorities, and initiatives of state agencies, diligently working to align field practices to state policy.

OCALI hosts a highly-regarded annual conference of autism and disabilities leaders from across the nation and around the world. OCALICON provides a gathering of state and national leaders, educators, parents, service providers, self-advocates, scholars, and policy makers focused on common concerns and shared proven solutions addressing issues and challenges experienced by people with autism, sensory disabilities, and low-incidence disabilities across their lifespan.

Based on a respect for people with autism and low incidence disabilities and our belief in their right, need, and desire to achieve their full potential, OCALI inspires change and promotes access to improve their outcomes through leadership, training and professional development, technical assistance, collaboration, and technology.

#### Statement of Purpose

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The purpose of this Request for Proposal (RFP) is to obtain an external evaluator to work with OCALI staff on evaluation of deliverables within OCALI's main contract with the Ohio Department of Education, Office for Exceptional Children (ODE/OEC), for the remainder of the 2021-2022 contract year. The major deliverables for this contract are included here:

##### Deliverable 1

- Continue to convene and engage with multiple representatives of State of Ohio agencies that serve individuals with autism spectrum disorders and low incidence disabilities. Through engaging such representatives, establish and maintain partnerships with those agencies to address statewide, regional,

and local autism and low incidence-related educational needs on an ongoing basis by developing strategic initiatives in the focus areas of disability identification, literacy, secondary transition and the qualification/training of service providers. Participate as a member of the Interagency Workgroup on Autism, established by the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities, including monthly scheduled Interagency Workgroup meetings for the year and provide technical assistance and support to the Department in the Department's leadership role to develop and implement initiatives identified by the work group.

#### Deliverable 2

- Continue to collaborate with State Support Team (SST) personnel as well as the SST networks and build capacity through Ohio's Statewide System of Support, including collaboration with Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities, to address school district needs for educational services, educational assessment and evaluation, assistive technology, communication and literacy, family support and partnerships, leisure and recreational activities, and secondary transition for persons with autism spectrum disorders and low incidence disabilities. Continue to attend all monthly SST director meetings, monthly SST network meetings, and collaborate with and respond to needs for building capacity through Ohio's Statewide System of Support by developing and implementing web site tools, resources and learning modules for ongoing technical assistance to regional and district teams, in order to improve instructional practice and student performance.

#### Deliverable 3

- Continue to collaborate at least monthly meetings and on an as needed and as requested basis with parent and professional organizations to develop resources and training materials for both families and education-related professionals on topics related to autism spectrum disorders and low incidence disabilities. Continue to provide information and technical support to parent and professional organizations seeking services for their children and youth with autism spectrum disorders and low incidence disabilities. Continue to actively engage the State Support Team Family Engagement Specialists, Parent Mentors, Autism Society of Ohio, the Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities, and other parent and professional organizations in the development of such resources and information dissemination.

#### Deliverable 4

- Continue to provide technical assistance to school districts and other special education service providers through designing and implementing statewide, regional, and district level professional development (PD) opportunities, including those that address educational assessment, evidence-based programming and high leverage instructional practices for general and special educators serving children with autism spectrum disorders and low incidence disabilities and other disabilities. The contractor implements this work daily, this encompasses daily responsibilities required to manage and maintain responsive request by the Department, regional entities and districts.

In continuing to carry out such PD design and implement action, create and deliver evidence-based programs and technical assistance for districts and other special education service providers by convening a global disability conference, development of internet modules, certification programs, intervention services, and dissemination of research in the education and provision of evidence-based practices to children and youth with autism spectrum disorders and other disabilities.

Provide universal access to professional learning opportunities on the OCALI, Autism Internet Modules, Assistive Technology Internet Modules, Autism Certification Center, Student Inventory for Technology Supports, Ohio Academic Content Standards Extended, and Literacy Library web site which targets educators, administrators and families. This resource will be provided in web modules and key topic areas are designed based on state level data which indicates need for additional acquisition or knowledge and

this may include student engagement, instruction, behavior, supplemental supports, related services, multi-tiered system of supports and transition as well as culture, diversity and other relevant focus areas of need.

Create, and provide universal access on the OCALI web site, short videos demonstrating best practices and accompanying resources for Ohio's Whole Child Framework.

Provide professional development to the Department employees in the areas of disability and user experience, accessible design, and remediation of inaccessible content in order to support the Department in building the capacity to create and provide accessible content and events. Trainings will be developed based on industry recognized accessibility standards and best practices as relevant to each training topic.

#### Deliverable 5

- Continue to engage Ohio Institutions of Higher Education in the development and implementation of teacher preparation courses and professional development for general and special educators, as well as related service providers, serving persons with autism spectrum disorders and low incidence disabilities by attending quarterly Deans Compact meetings and collaborating with the Ohio Dean's Compact for Exceptional Children (ODCEC), including utilizing ODCEC and its recommendations and feedback in organizing and delivering such teacher preparation courses and programs and working with ODCEC in providing for national experts at the Global Disabilities Conference. Respond and partner with colleges and universities as requested, to support instructional materials and other learning resources to include; working with higher education pre-service programs on creating course content on the Whole Child including topics of social-emotional learning, PBIS and trauma-informed practices.

Work with higher education pre-service programs on creating course content on the whole child including topics of social-emotional learning, PBIS and trauma-informed practices.

#### Deliverable 6

- Continue to develop and manage a statewide clearinghouse for information about autism spectrum disorders and low incidence disabilities to include:
  - Maintaining resources for public distribution via an online audiovisual oan library of videos, digital media and books for educators, professionals and families that address strategies for improving evidenced based instruction, functional needs and quality of life for children with autism spectrum disorder and low incidence disabilities.
  - Maintaining a collection of assistive technology devices, adaptive equipment computer training lab and computer software for loan to Ohio's Statewide System of Support and local school districts to support evaluation teams in identifying the appropriate communication and assistive technology needs of children with autism and low incidence disabilities.
  - Monitoring information on resources, trends, policies, services, and current educational interventions.
  - Respond to requests for information from parents and educators of children with autism and low incidence disabilities.

#### Deliverable 7

- Implement the National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standards (NIMAS) legislation by obtaining or producing Accessible Educational Materials (AEM) in alternate formats (braille, large print, audio, and digital text) for Ohio school districts. Maintain a clearinghouse for AEM for eligible students with print disabilities.

Collaborate with the Ohio State School for the Blind and the Ohio School for the Deaf to establish professional development hubs throughout the state that provide coaching and job-embedded opportunities for teachers to implement high leverage instructional strategies. Collaboration to include:

- a. Planning and conducting monthly meetings; and
- b. Providing the Department with quarterly evaluation progress reports on professional learning attendance and impact on students.

Collaborate with the Ohio State School for the Blind and the Ohio School for the Deaf to build the knowledge and capacity of regional state support team consultants to provide high-quality coaching in the areas of sensory disabilities, assistive technology, and accessible educational materials. Provide within each Monthly Network meeting.

Facilitate statewide capacity for conducting individual specialized assessments that addresses instructional and educational needs for students with sensory disabilities including functional vision assessment, functional hearing assessment, orientation and mobility, and assistive technology. Provided monthly consultation with regional support providers, learning management systems and professional development as requested.

Collaborate with the Ohio State School for the Blind and the Ohio School for the Deaf to support families with children with sensory disabilities and projects to include:

- a. Parent university;
- b. Family empowerment kits; and
- c. Other collaborative projects as defined by the Outreach Center for Deafness and Blindness, the Assistive Technology and Accessible Educational Materials Center, Ohio State School for the Blind, Ohio School for the Deaf, and with prior approval by the Office for Exceptional Children.

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### **Intellectual Property**

The ESCCO, on behalf of OCALI, is the sole owner of all content and materials developed under this RFP. OCALI retains the distribution rights to any content or materials to exercise as it deems appropriate. Selected evaluators may not use, reuse, distribute, publish, or base derivative works upon such materials without the express, prior written consent of the ESCCO.

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### **Renewal Fiscal Year 2023**

While this proposal is for the fiscal year 2022 (July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022), the contractor for this year will be given priority consideration for a fiscal year 2023 partnership (July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023), provided that proposal commitments are met.

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### **Request for Proposal**

The ESCCO, on behalf of OCALI, seeks a proposal for external evaluation services. These services must fulfill the following:

- Formative and summative evaluation of contract deliverables;
- Strategic consulting to support executive thought leadership, expansion of organizational efficiencies, outcomes, and organizational culture; guide organizational priorities, such as organizational development to increase partnerships with state agencies and representatives; and heighten business development efforts and stakeholder engagement;
- Production of monthly, quarterly, and summary reports;
- Ensure that written reports are provided to the Department of Education on a quarterly basis as follows:
  - First report due by the end of September of each year;
  - Second report due by the end of December of each year;

- Third report due by the end of March of each year; and
- Fourth report due by the end of June of each year.
- Additionally, a final written report of the external evaluation results must be provided to the Department by the end of June of each year. All written reports to be provided to the Department under this Deliverable must document the manner in which Contractor considers and utilizes the external evaluator's feedback and recommendations, as well as be submitted in an electronic reproducible format.

### **Requirements for Proposal Preparation (Phase 1)**

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Given the collaborative nature of the contractual work, all applicants must have the demonstrated ability to work seamlessly with teams to identify and leverage knowledge and resources.

Please submit the following as part of the official proposal (organize and label sections accordingly). The submission will become the basis on which OCALI will judge the applicant's ability to perform the services included in the RFP.

Responses must communicate an understanding of the scope and deliverables of the RFP, describe how the tasks are to be performed, and identify potential problems in meeting the deliverables as well as methods to identify and solve such problems.

**Phase 1:** The proposal submitted in response to this RFP must include the following documents:

1. Technical Proposal: (Organize and label sections accordingly)
  - A. Cover page, including company name, contact information, company biography and proposal summary, signed by the respondent;
  - B. Narrative Plan: Communicates approach to delivering services requested, proposed timeline for execution and support, commitment to understanding OCALI's vision and providing services that align with our mission and core function, ability to work collaboratively with client teams and other vendors, and method to project management;
  - C. Organizational Capacity: Resumes and/or summary biographies of the key personnel with detailed description of their roles related to the evaluation; description of any subcontractors and their work, including but not limited to resumes and/or summary biographies;
  - D. Related Project Experience: Evidence of successful evaluation of contracts of similar size, scope and complexity, as detailed above, including demonstration of ability to work collaboratively with client teams and other vendors; experience with educational and/or instructional contracts preferred and should be highlighted;
  - E. Recommendations: Two professional references/letters of recommendation from two current clients similar work and customers as OCALI. Current shall mean references for whom the vendor has performed work within the past 12 months. Organization name and contact information must be provided.
2. Cost Proposal:
  - a. Pricing structure – outline pricing for services required to meet the requested items.
  - b. Contract agreement – provide sample contract language typically used by your organization.

Applicants that request consideration for the full-range of project tasks should ensure that the proposal does not exceed \$159,750.00.

3. Work Sample: At least three samples of relevant evaluation reports; educational and/or instructional evaluation preferred.

PLEASE NOTE:

- Responses must follow the prescribed format or they shall be deemed non-responsive. Incomplete or late responses may be removed from consideration.
- The cover page must be signed by the respondent.
- Proposals should be prepared simply and economically, avoiding the use of elaborate promotional materials beyond those sufficient to provide complete presentation.
- Any proprietary material submitted with the proposal that is considered confidential by the bidder must specifically be so identified, and the basis for such confidentiality must be specifically set forth in the proposal.
- Submission of quote does not constitute any type of binding Agreement or Contract between ESCCO/OCALI and respondent.
- ESCCO/OCALI assumes no responsibility for any cost incurred in developing a response to this RFP.
- ESCCO/OCALI reserves the right to accept or reject responses to this RFP at its sole discretion.
- ESCCO/OCALI's decision is final with respect to the awarding of this Contract.

**Proposal Submission**

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Email electronic copies of the proposals and work samples to Sheila Smith at sheila\_smith@ocali.org. Please label clearly in the subject line to clarify if it is a response to the RFP. The proposal and work samples must be received by **Tuesday, September 7, 2021, at 3:00 pm EDT.**

Questions about this RFP should be submitted in writing to sheila\_smith@ocali.org by **Monday, August 30, 2021, by 3:00 pm EDT.** Please use the subject line 2021-2022 OCALI External Evaluator RFP. Responses to received questions will be shared with all applicants.

**Request for Proposal: Phase 2**

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Selected applicants will be asked to interview with the OCALI team. Applicants selected will be asked to demonstrate their work by submitting a proposed plan for evaluation of a selected set of OCALI deliverables.

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**RFP Process Schedule**

Activity	Date
Release of RFP	Monday, August 23, 2021
Final Date for Receipt of Questions by 3:00 pm	Monday, August 30, 2021
Final Date for Official Responses to Questions	Tuesday, August 31, 2021
Proposals Due by 3:00 pm EDT (Phase 1)	Tuesday, September 7, 2021
Applicants Notified of Status/Next Steps	Friday, September 10, 2021
Interviews Start-End (Phase 2)	Monday, September 13, 2021
RFP Award(s) Announced	Monday, September 20, 2021

## **Duties**

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Contractor shall hold himself/herself/itself available to render, and shall render at the request of the ESCCO/OCALI, the services set forth in the scope of work above for the benefit of the ESCCO/OCALI. Contractor shall devote such time as may be reasonably required to perform Contractor's duties under the contract. Contractor will maintain, for the duration of the Contract, any certificate or license required by law to perform the services required by this RFP.

Contractor shall perform all services with reasonable care, skill, and diligence as would normally be provided by an experienced consultant and in accordance with industry standards.

## **Other Requirements Include**

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Contractor must provide a W-9 with a valid EIN or be registered with the Ohio Secretary of State.

Contractor must complete the Standard Affirmation & Disclosure Form to abide with Executive Order 2011-12K affirming no services of the contractor or its subcontractors under this Contract will be performed outside the United States.

Contractor shall secure professional liability insurance and any other insurances required by law.

At the Contractor's sole cost, Contractor shall maintain a comprehensive knowledge regarding evidence-based practices and systems practices leading to positive outcomes for students. Contractor shall, at all times during the term of this Contract and at Contractor's own expense, comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, rules and regulations, and shall maintain in force all licenses and permits required for performance under this Contract.

Contractor shall be responsible for the purchase and use of all equipment necessary to perform the Services, except that ESCCO/OCALI may elect to provide Contractor access to a computer and/or computer network in order to facilitate Contractor's secure access to, and provision of, information related to the performance of Contractor's duties and to facilitate communication with ESCCO/OCALI. Any access to or use of ESCCO/OCALI computers or computer networks shall be subject to all ESCCO/OCALI policies governing such use by ESCCO/OCALI employees.

## **Finding for Recovery**

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Contractor represents that he/she/it is not subject to any unresolved findings for recovery resulting from an audit conducted by the Auditor of State between January 1, 2001 and the present time. Contractor further represents that neither the Contractor nor any of its principal officers are listed in the Auditor of State's database of persons' subject to such findings.

## **Evaluation**

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Selection of Contractor will be based on the following criteria:

- Name, position, and contact information for one primary contact.
- Narrative response describing how the Applicant would use its expertise to meet the objectives outlined in the scope of work.
- Narrative response describing the Applicant's competence to perform the required services as indicated by the education and experience of the Applicant's personnel, especially the education and experience of the employee(s) who would be assigned to perform the services.
- Ability in terms of workload and availability of qualified personnel to perform the required services competently.
- Evidence of successful implementation of services similar to the scope of work outlined, provided within the last 12 months.

- Evidence of knowledge and experience in providing products/services that meet the needs of people with disabilities, as well as a commitment to fostering an inclusive and accessible environment.
- Recommendations/references from a minimum two (2) current or previous clients.
- Overall cost of products/services.
- (Possible) The interview process and Phase 2 proposed plan of evaluation

Additional considerations:

- Ohio-based business OR business located outside Ohio but with a local office.
- Prior work with OCALI or a similar organization.
- Knowledge of Ohio agencies, systems, initiatives, and/or policies impacting the population served by OCALI.

At its discretion, the ESCCO/OCALI is not required to select the Contractor that submits the lowest cost proposal for providing the services. Instead, the ESCCO/OCALI intends to select the Contractor submitting the proposal deemed by the ESCCO/OCALI to be in the ESCCO/OCALI's best interest. In making its selection, the ESCCO/OCALI may consider any other information, including information not requested in this RFP or not included in the proposals received.

In the event the ESCCO/OCALI is unable to negotiate a satisfactory contract with the top ranked Contractor, the ESCCO/OCALI may terminate negotiations with that Contractor and enter into negotiations with the Contractor submitting the proposal ranked next best. This RFP is not and shall not be construed as an offer of a contract by the ESCCO/OCALI. Any contractual arrangement will be evidenced solely by a Contract authorized by the ESCCO/OCALI.

### **Notification**

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All applicants will receive notification of the awarded contract by **Monday, September 20, 2021**. Notification will be sent to the primary contact by email.

The ESCCO/OCALI reserves the right to reject any and all proposals where the contractor takes exception to the terms and conditions of the RFP or fails to meet the terms and conditions, including but not limited to, standards, specifications, and requirements as specified in the RFP.

The ESCCO/OCALI reserves the right to reject, in whole or in part, any and all proposals where the ESCCO/OCALI, taking into consideration factors including but not limited to, price and the results of the evaluation process, has determined that award of a contract would not be in the best interest of the ESCCO/OCALI or the state.

- Past performances as reflected by the evaluations of previous clients with respect to factors such as control of costs, quality of work and meeting of deadlines; and other similar factors;
- The services offered are not in compliance with the requirements, specifications, and terms and conditions set forth in the RFP;
- Pricing offered is considered to be excessive in comparison with existing market conditions or exceeds the available funds of the state; or
- It is determined that award of a contract would not be in the best interests of the state.

The ESCCO/OCALI may award a contract in whole or in part to one or multiple contractors. Notice of any potential partial and/or multiple party award(s) shall be provided in the RFP.